

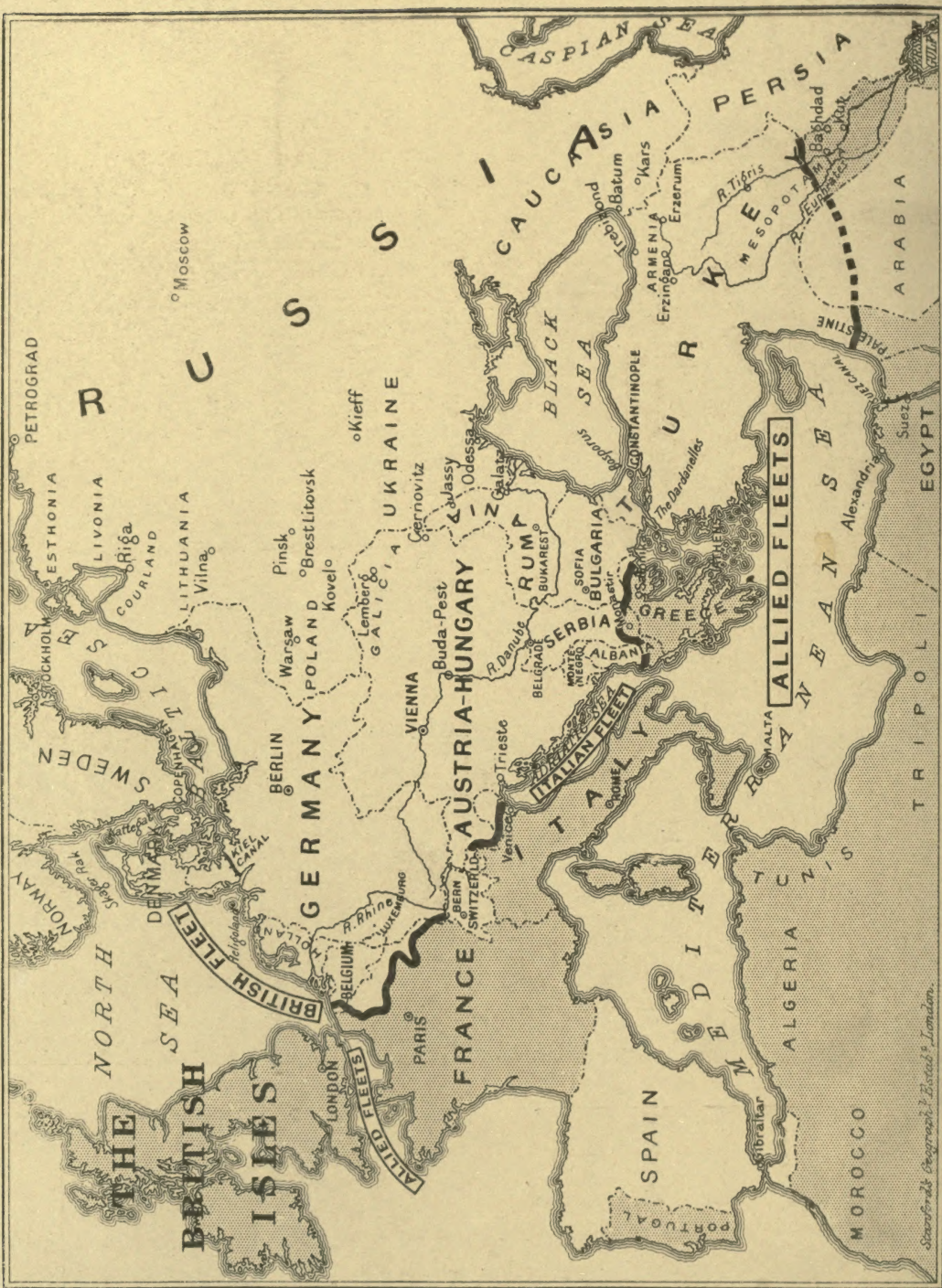


# THE WAR

in April

MCMXVIII.





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*The German Offensive. French Cavalry Patrol working with the British.*

## THE WAR IN APRIL 1918

### The Kaiser's Battle.

THE first act of the decisive battle has been played. The Germans, finding themselves possessed of a great reinforcement through the peace with Russia, have determined to put to the test once more their fortunes in the field. After imposing self-determination on the East so successfully they resolved to see whether they could not, also, forcibly self-determine the West.

They set about the offensive very thoroughly. The military clique seem to have had no doubt that they could secure a military decision, and the Kaiser took their view. It was to be the "Kaiser's Battle." Lest the imperial master should show any wavering the Lichnowsky and Mühlen revelations were sown broadcast. The former fastened the guilt of the war on Germany; the latter went farther and suggested

that it was the Kaiser himself who launched the terrible struggle in order to prove that he knew how to be decided. Having burned their boats, the German militarists set themselves to redeem their position, showing a cynical insight into the motives which sway their countrymen. Success, they argued, would redeem all and banish every scruple.

As a result the world has lived through a month of the most tremendous fighting in its history. Indeed, never would it have been thought that such great forces could be moved with so much of deadly precision and so much dogged endurance. The forces were worthy of their objective, for there can be no possible doubt that the Germans aimed at no conquest of territory, however important, but simply at securing a decision in the field in virtue of which they could impose their will upon the Allies.



The latter realised the conflict as focussing the fundamental issue between them and Germany, viz., *whether force or right shall prevail in the determination of people's destinies.*

The objective of the offensive being to destroy the Allies' fighting force, it must be reckoned successful only in so far as it has accomplished that effort. This touchstone of success we must carefully bear in mind in our study of the battle.

H.C.O'N.

#### The Battlefield.

To anyone who knows that fifty-mile sector of the British front, from Cambrai to St. Quentin, which was Ludendorf's deliberate choice of the place most likely on March 21st, 1918, to break beneath that blow which was to be given with Germany's full might, there is not a shadow of doubt that the German General Staff were convinced of their ability to finish the war with that blow. Had they been able to foresee

that the tidal wave of Germany's highest power would carry them no farther there than about five miles the wrong side of Amiens, then they would never have sentenced their hosts to death for it. Their choice was exactly right if they were looking for the sector which, broken by a gigantic mass of men and weight of guns, would give them a swift and dramatic end to the land war; but failure there would give them but the additional responsibility of a lengthened line which would enclose the greatest area of war-desolated country in France—empty of food, with not a roof in the length and breadth of it except at Nesle and Ham, its roads battle-worn and laborious when not quite impossible, and with a capacity for depressing the souls of men exceeding the appalling desolation of the Polar regions.

The Somme country, Santerre and Picardy, had no large cities. Bapaume, Péronne, Nesle and Ham were small country towns in a



*The German Offensive. Prisoners of the Guard Grenadier Regiment in a Cage.*



spacious and undulating plateau devoted to agriculture, where the woods were few and usually small, and the little hamlets in the valleys were widely scattered and not easy of access except when upon the straight main roads joining the larger towns. The River Somme serpentine among the chalk uplands has a bad habit of filling valley bottoms with impassable reedy marsh.

It must have been, in some seasons, even in peace times, bleak and forbidding enough. I have stood at some places in it in this war, as near Sailly, Miraumont, le Barque and Dompierre, when that country gave a spectator the awful impression that this was the day after the Day of Judgment, and the earth was dead for ever. When the Germans retreated there a year ago, uncovering the secrets of their positions, there were things to be seen more terrible and horrifying than anything imagined by Dante. I had never quite believed in the stories of "heavy German losses." How is one to prove them? But here, for once, was the indisputable evidence. On an earth that was blasted of all life, which was only a mass of overturned mud full of craters half-full of rain that had turned the colour of blood, or bright green, or dirty yellow, where the prone and splintered trees were stripped even of their bark by shell-fire, and the place where villages had stood were indistinguishable in general ruin and chaos, as far as the eye could reach, in every direction, were the unfortunate German victims sacrificed to Kaiserdom. Some had only just died; some had been there six months. The German trenches were a compost of clay, rags, flesh and bones. Parts of bodies projected everywhere. In some places the dead lay all facing one way, still with their rifles and fixed bayonets, where battalions had been mown down in attacks. In places the dead were piled literally breast-high. Such was the old German ground, as I saw it everywhere, from the Ancre round by the wood of St. Pierre Vaast to South of Péronne.

When the Germans came back again in their great attack which began on the 21st March

it will have been noted by all the world that their General Staff said, "The British are burning the French village in their retreat."

I have always been cautious of evidence concerning "the lies of the enemy." But here, as in the case of the use of poison gas in war, it happens that the evidence is my own, so that at least I can satisfy one mind. The enemy, in this case, certainly lies, for there were no villages to burn. There was not a house to destroy. The Germans had attended to that a year before. The obliteration of anything of value in all that land was one of their most vindictive and malicious acts against poor France when they made their broad retreat last year. There was no need for so much damage, even from a military standpoint. It was a cruel and coldly-planned effort to reduce that part of France to thorough ruin. For example, Péronne, which actually was in the battle zone, had been spared by French and British gunners. They wished to save an historic French town they knew that some day they would recover. Only the barracks were shelled. I thoroughly examined that town all one day—the day after the Germans left it. There were few signs of shell damage; but every private house in all the streets, and the church, the town hall and the historic buildings had either been fired or blown asunder with dynamite.

In fact, in all that great region beyond Bapaume and Péronne, over which the Germans have since returned, I never found in some weeks of travel, except at Nesle and Ham, a cottage with a roof. The Germans had destroyed them all. They had removed the railway metals, blown up the roads, cut down the trees—even gone to the length of felling sapling fruit trees in the grounds of horticulturalists (I write only of what I saw)—and blown up or fired all isolated houses and villages, though they were far removed from the battle lines. They had literally laid waste the land. There was the beautiful chateau of Guyoncourt beyond the Somme, well out of shell fire, which, when vacated by a German head-quarter staff that had long occupied it, was



blown up. Even its separate mortuary chapel was destroyed, with its altar and vestments; and below it—again I saw this myself—the Germans had actually smashed the coffin lid of the late head of that house, and exposed his corpse. Pure morbid curiosity, I suppose. A neighbouring village had not a roof in it, nor a tree in its orchards that would bear fruit again.

Even the agricultural implements had been gathered into a mass, within which charges of dynamite had been exploded. Manure had been thrown into the wells. One thing only the Ger-

mans had left untouched—a cemetery of their own dead, beautifully surrounded by new stone posts and painted catenary chains; for I suppose they knew it was safe with the chivalrous French, though the newly-blossoming trees of a French orchard, just ruined by them, was leaning its fallen buds against those very cemetery chains.

No. The Germans never expected to come back to that land; and when they planned to do so after the collapse of Russia, certainly never planned to do no more than just occupy







*Scene on the Ancre.*



*A Street in Péronne.*



again a region which they had utterly desolated, which they had made impossible for human habitation except with the labour of a generation.

H. M. T.

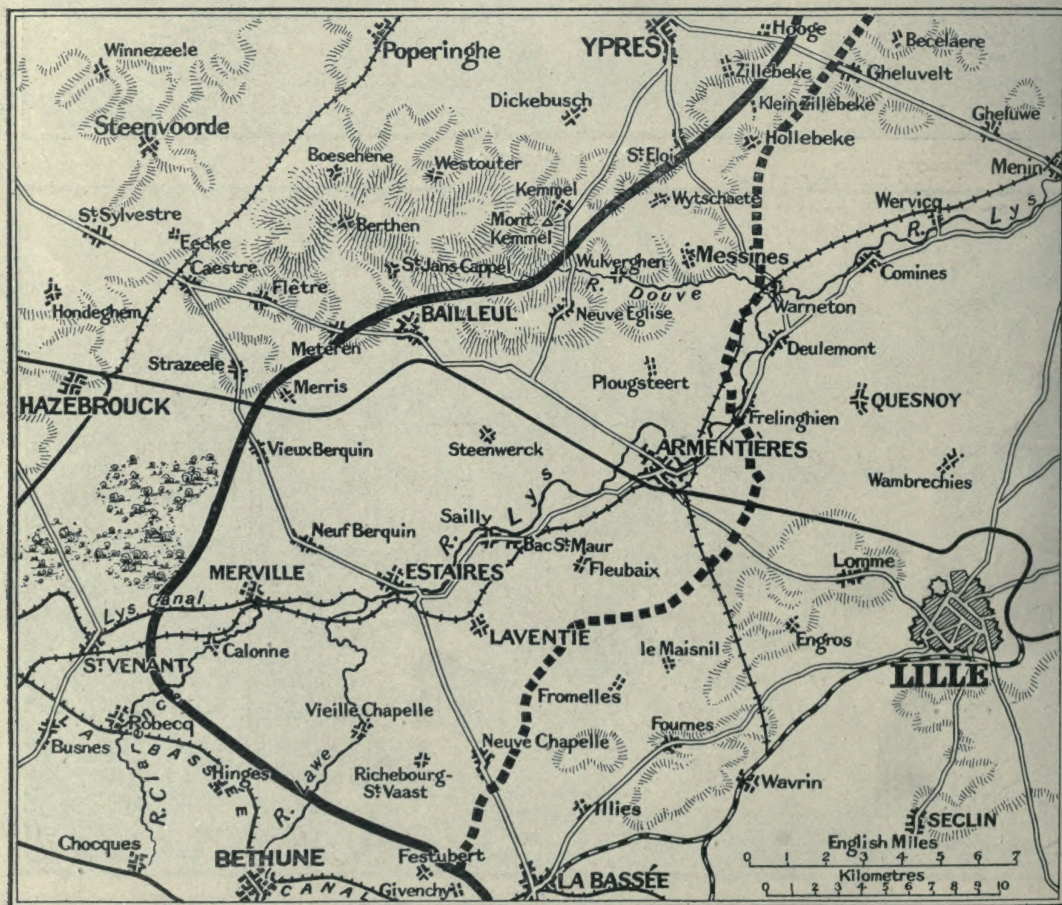
#### The Action.

The offensive began almost abruptly in the mist of early morning on March 21st.

There were local bombardments and attacks at various points to distract the defenders. The main attack, however, was made on a 50-mile front from Vendeuil, near St. Quentin, to the River Scarpe, just beneath Lens. Into this first assault the enemy packed a huge mass of men. There were 40 divisions in the first line; 37 were in reserve. These attacking divisions were flung forward after a short but violent bombardment. There was no real element of

the unexpected, but the brevity of the preliminary shelling and the cover afforded by the heavy mist gave the attackers some of the advantages of surprise. The work of the British artillery and machine-gunners was hampered as a result; the masses of the German attack were able to get to the wire and into the advance positions.

For the time being this was all they were able to accomplish. The battle positions held them, and their men, coming on in dense waves, were mercilessly cut down at so close a range that there was not even opportunity for missing. The Germans, however, had staked heavily on this offensive, and now, as all through the battle, they flung in men and yet more men, so that even over the dead weight would have an effect. This gigantic pressure obtained







*The Cathedral at Albert.*

results. On the St. Quentin sector troops of the Fifth Army that had fought bravely and without yielding for most of the day fell back to a better defensive line. The Germans scored their first advance.

On the morning of the 22nd there was a pause, but not of long duration. The Germans, whose calculations had been thrown out by the staunch resistance, redoubled their efforts. With additional weight they hammered at that sector of the line which had already bent backward. The mass attacks were repeated; the disregard of losses became reckless. The pressure of mass had effect; west of St. Quentin the line was ruptured.

The Germans, never slow to take advantage, pressed forward in strength to exploit their success, to break out of the sides of the breach and enlarge the gap. Their intention, the great

objective of this Kaiser battle, was to drive a force westward between the British and French armies. They wished to break the unity of the defence, to roll up the British, and to deal them a shattering blow. The Germans had made a gap; they were driving onward to make their blows successful.

General von Hutier, with the army that had broken the Russian front at Riga, was pressing forward to exploit the situation west of St. Quentin. He had no easy task. His way through the gap was blocked by an obstinate few who, regardless of their own sacrifices, held their ground to the last man. In the quarries of Templeux-le-Guérard Lancashire troops defied successive waves of the enemy to turn them out; their machine guns took so terrible a toll that the Germans themselves speak of them with respect. At Le Verguier a body of the Queen's



West Surrey Regiment held out against enormous odds, and stayed on fighting until the sea of men they could no longer hold submerged them. Between these two points the Germans penetrated to Hervilly. The oncoming waves were met, broken and thrust back by a counter-attack of Tanks and infantry. Reserve troops were hastily sent up, the gap was filled, and through the reinforcements the troops who had fought so well fell back to the Somme.

The pressure of mass had had effect, however. The British were forced back over the Crozat Canal to the Péronne-Ham line. This retirement had further consequences. To the North the Third Army had resisted all General von Below's efforts to repeat his Italian break through on a front from Arleux to Cambrai. Without giving a foot they had made him pay the heaviest penalties. With the retirement of the Fifth Army the Third had to swing back in conformity to a line running from Monchy by Croisilles to Morchies and the Bapaume-Cambrai road. On the 23rd the enemy strove to keep this front on the move. Von Below and von Marwitz were anxious to break the line above Amiens and to force it into as rapid a retreat as that portion below. Their attacks against points on the line between Monchy and the heights of Henin were pressed ferociously. Fresh divisions were passed through those shattered by the resistance of the British, and the attacks were incessant. The cost was extremely heavy, but the attacks won nothing. Only the continuation of the retreat to the south caused this line two days later to retire, and enabled the Germans to take positions they could not win. On the 23rd the retreat was steadying to the South. The British troops were breaking the endless waves of attack, and on the right the French reserves were already entering into the battle. The dash of the French was as brilliant as the British defence had been tenacious. The German rush was met and blunted in a brave fight at Jussy.

Once having got the allied armies in motion, and particularly having pushed them into the ground between Cambrai and Bapaume—which

even the Germans, in their retirement last year, had shown to be lacking in good defensive lines—the enemy had forced the allied troops into a difficult position. Using to the utmost the immense local numerical superiority which the initiative gave him he pressed his attack without resting. On the 24th he had reached Bapaume, and had taken it after a terrible struggle, while his left was already at the Somme and striving to force a crossing near Licourt. Further to the south-west he crossed the river at Ham, but was here meeting the stiffening resistance of the French. North of Bapaume he could do nothing against the unbending Third Army, and all through the day his constantly repeated attacks at Mory, Achiet-le-Grand and Gommecourt were broken and flung back by Lancashire and Yorkshire troops who refused to give way.

Fresh divisions were passed through the German assaulting divisions, and on the 25th the fighting broke out with a greater intensity as the Germans pushed through the chalky hills between Bapaume and Combles, hammered their way across the Somme at Licourt, and pressed outward to the south beyond Nesle and Guiscard. So great were the German efforts that in the Bapaume sector they brought the battle to a critical pitch. Flinging in their masses they took Martinpuich and Courcellette, and for the moment it seemed that they might break through. It was in splendid and dogged fighting that the British kept the Germans off, and held their line intact. It was somewhere about here that Brigadier-General Carey swept billets and camps of cooks and orderlies and every man who could stand up on his legs, flung them into a break, and, fighting at their head, stopped the gap against masses of picked German troops, until the line was restored. To the northward the Lancashire and Yorkshire battalions, keeping touch with troops on their right, had fallen back in line with them, and now held firmly the strong heights of Pusieux and Bucquoy. South of Péronne, at Licourt, the Germans pressed no less than 10 fresh divisions into the fight, and though their rafts and bridges were shattered time and time again they did at length force their way across.



On April 26th the German right wing had ceased to swing to any great extent, and was pulled up in bitter fighting on a line Braye-Albert-Beaumont Hamel-Pusieux-Ayette-Boiry-Henin to a point near Monchy. South of the Somme the progress had been greater. The ten German divisions had been increased to 13, and these bore 4 British divisions backward to the line Méricourt-Proyat-Rosières-Le Quesnoy. West of Noyon the advance had been slackened in fine fighting by British and French troops, and along the Oise the line was firm. On the 27th there were definite signs of weariness in the immense attack. The extraordinary heaviness of the losses, the vileness of the communications across the old battlefields, which the Germans themselves admit were devastated, and the fact that such an advance had outstripped the heavy artillery, as well as the hardships and blows the divisions had suffered, all conspired to check progress. By this time, too, the French were sending in more and more reserves to take some of the strain from the British, who had had to bear the whole weight of the immense stroke. The effect of these factors began to tell. The Germans endeavouring to get ahead in the triangle between the Ancre and the Somme were, on the 27th, thrust back with some violence beyond Chipilly, while further south their advancing waves were driven into Proyât. North of Albert, while striving to outflank that town in the direction of Mesnil, they were very severely handled and driven off. Only to the south, in the Montdidier area, did their divisions make progress, and their threat to this important railway centre was a grave one.

On the 28th the fighting astride the Somme was severe, the enemy was driven back by counter attacks, but the British line had to fall back to Hamel. On this day also the enemy made a determined effort to advance his right at Arras, his object being to free his wing and enable the whole line to swing forward to cut the vital railway running through Amiens and St. Pol; to do this would, in his opinion, accomplish his main aim—that of severing the British

from the French army. The fighting at Arras was of vehement nature, and it accomplished nothing. His defeat here must be counted as an exceedingly severe one. His success on the left, to the south, in no way counter-balanced this grave setback. He took Montdidier, but still had a firm French line confronting him.

On the 29th progress on the Somme was stopped. South of it, in the valley of the Avre, the enemy efforts still persisted, and in fluctuating battles he was able to win fragmentary advances after most costly fights. These battles gave rise to some heroic episodes such as that in which Canadian cavalry and British infantry recaptured with great spirit the village of Moreuil, and that in which some British Dragoons charged in three lines against the woods of Hangard and broke through them in brilliant fashion. On the whole, however, the Kaiser battle had run down ineffectually before even reaching its definite objective, Amiens and the railway, and without even coming within measurable distance of its ambitious and only reasonable aim, the breaking of the British army and its severance from the French. There was a good deal more fighting. On the stubborn northern wing at Ayette, in the Avre district, and to the south, where the French exchanged give-and-take battles along a line below Montdidier, Lassigny, Noyon and the Oise. Here and there some tactical retirements, notably one behind the Ailette about April 8th, the large scale movement for the moment had ended; the Germans had for their part their gain of ground and their dead; the Entente the knowledge that they had passed through what was perhaps one of the most critical phases of the war, and had held their line intact in spite of it.

There can be no doubt of the immensity of the German effort. The enemy had flung into this one fight close on 100 divisions, and had used them unsparingly in his attempt to attain his end. As he outnumbered his opponents in men, so he had sought to crush them with an over-powering concentration of guns. He had not succeeded, and his effort had cost him something like 300,000 casualties.



In the fighting all ranks of the British showed magnificent heroism in facing with equanimity superior numbers, and beating them as far as individual resistance could. The artillery had shown great devotion, firing, as the Germans admitted, into the masses of the enemy until they had come within rifle range and fighting at all times on level terms with the infantry. In this battle, too, the British Air Service surpassed all its former great records. In every sphere from reconnaissance to its use as flying infantry the aerial arm performed extraordinary deeds. The aviators alone, on occasions, defeated enemy attacks by flying low and breaking up the waves with machine gun fire, and at critical moments they managed in this way to stop gaps almost effectively as infantry. Their work at harassing the enemy behind the line was remarkable. On some days they dropped more than 50 tons of explosives on troops on the march, railway junctions, roads, transport trains, and at the same time fired off as many as 250,000 rounds in the course of a single day. Their fighting successes were almost startling; they completely dominated the situation, and in the course of ceaseless battles between March 21st and April 13th brought down no less than 529 of their opponents, while only losing 162 machines themselves.

D.N.

#### The Battle of the Lys.

The region of the second German attempt to break the British line is of a totally different character from the Somme country. It is just north of the range of chalk downs which roll from Artois north-west across the Pas de Calais to Boulogne. It is within the great plain of Flanders, with the hills of Kemmel, the Scherpenberg, Mont de Cats, Mont Noir, and Cassel, lying as high lumps on an isolated plateau north of the valley of the Lys, and west of the ruins of Ypres; so that the Germans burst into a valley amphitheatre, which on the south has the hills of Artois, and on the north the abrupt height of land which separates the Lys valley from the Yser plain. At the western limit of the new German wedge in the British

line the enemy wave broke against the extensive forest of Nieppe. It was this forest which gave the British the opportunity to hold the enemy off the town of Hazebrouck; an important centre of communication certainly, but not having that vital importance to the British army within the Ypres salient which some critics imagine, for they were unaware of the labour British engineers have put into military road and railway construction in Flanders. This narrow amphitheatre which the Germans now occupy deeply and precariously, because it is overlooked throughout, is full of place-names that have undying memories of the deeds of "the contemptible little army" of General French. It is forgotten to-day that the Germans were once at Hazebrouck in October, 1914. That was at the beginning of the great battle for the English Channel. In a brilliant little action General Haldane, with the famous 3rd Division and some details of cavalry and guns, turned the Germans off the hills about Hazebrouck, and drove them eastward. In another week the great battle for the coast was engaged along the Yser, round Ypres, on the Messines ridge, south past "Plug Street" wood, and the city of Armentières, Estaires, Laventie, Neuve Chapelle, Festubert and Givenchy; and so to Arras, where General Foch was directing the French defence. The amphitheatre now occupied by the enemy is a flat, aqueous and undistinguished country, remarkable for its mud and its numerous ditches which, when the rain is on the hills around, have a habit of swamping out friend and foe alike. About Armentières in winter there were miles of trenches so deeply flooded that nobody could hold them, for they sank beneath spreading meres.

H.M.T.

#### The Action.

The battle opened after several days' bombardment, which included the hurling of some 60,000 gas shells over the allied lines, on the night of April 8th. On the following day the infantry attacks began about dawn upon an 11 mile stretch between La Bassée Canal and





*Indian Cavalry entering Kanikin.*

Armentières. The German object was to get the whole of the sector above the La Bassée Canal, and either capture or destroy the armies which lay therein. Realised in territory this meant the capture of Béthune, Hazebrouck and Cassel; and there seems to have been little doubt in the minds of the German Command that all this could be achieved. The German communications were much better in this sector of the line. They could use fresh troops, whereas they knew that several divisions holding the allied lines were resting after the first great attack, and the sector was sufficiently distant from the area of their main assault to make an extreme strain on the allied arrangements for reinforcement.

The sector was originally held by a Portuguese division, sandwiched in between two

British divisions. It was on the Portuguese that the full force of the main attack fell, and its intensity may be gathered from the fact that 11 German divisions were identified in the struggle at the outset of the attack. In the tremendous pressure the Portuguese gave way, and by 11 o'clock the whole of the defensive system had been pierced, and a considerable breach had been made in the allied line.

On the flanks the Germans could not achieve the same success, and it was precisely there that it was most important to advance. Givenchy, which had to be taken before Bethune was captured, they seized only to be thrown out again. The 55th Division of Lancashire troops which held this part of the line was described in captured orders as of second rate quality. It was, however, too good for the German troops, and



the troops on the northern flank were similarly staunch. By Tuesday night the German front touched Lys about Lestrem and St. Maur; but the line sagged between Fleurbaix and Givenchy. At some points the German troops had crossed the river, but had been pressed back again.

On Wednesday Von Quast's 6th Army was joined by parts of Von Arnim's 4th Army. The front of attack was extended up to Hollebeke, and the plan was to carry the Messines ridge by a joint turning movement from the south by Von Quast's forces and a vigorous attack from the east by Von Arnim's Army. Hollebeke fell almost at once, and the troops to the south who had crossed the Lys and turned the position of Ploegsteert Wood were placed in a position commanding the reverse of the Messines ridge. Under these circumstances the Germans seem to have swept across the ridge, but by nightfall the 9th Division had almost recovered the whole of the ridge.

Meanwhile Armentières had been almost completely evacuated and then cut off. Thursday widened the German grip across the Lys, but did not improve the flanks of the attack. Friday and Saturday showed a significant slackening in the advance and but small gains. It was on Friday that the first attempts to mount the rising ground were made, and Neuve Eglise was captured. On Saturday it was retaken. On Sunday the position was attacked once more in great force and was abandoned. The following day the Germans pressed forward still further on to the high ground, and with the help of three fresh divisions they seized positions commanding Bailleul, which was accordingly evacuated.

The advance was forming so direct a threat to the communications of General Plumer's army that it seemed as if the Germans might still succeed in spite of their failure on the southern flank. The forward positions east of Ypres were evacuated on Sunday and Monday. The ground had been gained in bitter fighting of the year before, but it seemed only a prudent

precaution to minimise the risks if the Germans should break through the defences which lay before Mt. Kemmel and north of Meteren.

The fighting for the next few days centred in the Messines ridge. Wytschaete was taken on Tuesday, the 16th, but was recovered. On Wednesday it was abandoned, and the following day another vigorous attempt was made to loosen the southern allied flank at Givenchy. The small successes were easily redressed, and the attack there can only be reckoned a very costly defeat. An attack was delivered farther north in an endeavour to strike behind the Ypres salient for the north. This sector of the line was held by Belgians, who succeeded in recovering the local and temporary losses, and inflicted a marked tactical defeat on the Germans, capturing a number of prisoners.

Towards the end of the third week in March the fighting died down. It had lasted for a month, during which time 130 German divisions had been identified in the battle, a number of them twice, and an appreciable number three









times. Against the British alone 102 had been used, some of them several times. The Germans had attacked with the greatest courage and had paid accordingly. They had recovered the Somme battle-field which they evacuated in March, 1917, and had pressed their lines a little nearer Amiens. They had also made a considerable dent in the British line north of the La Bassée canal.

But can anyone think this was the intention of the German staff? Can anyone imagine that the Staff was satisfied? The Kaiser had retired from the picture and the battle had become Ludendorf's. The obvious meaning of this change is that the Staff no longer looked for the immediate decision which had urged them to launch the offensive, or at any rate that the Kaiser no longer trusted the inflated promises of the Staff.

The Germans had gained a considerable amount of territory, but had used at least half their total forces; and obviously these were their best forces. But the territory had been purchased by a lavish expenditure of blood. So heavy were the casualties that even the German *communiqués* began to explain that they were "normal" and that a great percentage were very light wounds.

The German Staff had expected to cut the British army from the French and to put it out of action as a fighting force. Then the Imperial Crown Prince was to march on Paris and all would be over. Even in their most modest hopes the German Staff hoped to find their problem simplified and the decision appreciably nearer. In the event the problem had become more complicated. The American troops had been brigaded with the French and British, and the armies formed one homogeneous whole under the supreme command of General Foch. The Allies reserve had not been engaged and the changed outlook on the situation was indicated by the threats to Holland. New schemes had to be arranged owing to the comparative failure of the original plan.

Before the offensive and during the first week of the fighting the German Press was unanimous

that the battle would settle everything. The same sort of thing had been said about every fresh offensive and particularly about the unrestricted submarine offensive. But in the fourth week of the new battle the Main Committee of the Reichstag returned to the U-boat warfare to secure the end of the war! No more significant commentary upon the achievement of the first month of the decisive battle could be made. And at this very time 200,000 men and many guns had been flung across the Channel in ten days.

But the German Staff have committed themselves and fresh blows will be delivered. Where these will fall and in what strength no one but the Germans can say. But it is obvious that blows of such strength cannot be delivered very often, and the Allies have gathered confidence from the first month of the battle.

H.C.O'N.

### General Allenby's Advance in Palestine.

OPERATIONS in the more distant theatres of war have shown a continued advance on the part of the British forces, marked by an effective raid on the Hedjaz railway, and a brilliant stroke on the Euphrates beyond Hit.

In Palestine the British positions on the east bank of the Jordan were extended on March 22nd and 23rd, while the forces of the King of the Hedjaz operated successfully near Jedaiah (78 miles north-west of Medina). On March 24th British troops advanced 9 miles through difficult country in the direction of Es Salt, occupied that place on the night of the 25th, and advanced on the Hedjaz railway. Their advance was opposed by both Turkish and German troops, from whom prisoners were taken.

By the afternoon of March 27th the British mounted troops were within a mile of the railway, and during the two following days the operations continued successfully in spite of stubborn opposition. Several miles of the track of the Hedjaz railway were effectively demolished by Colonial mounted troops, and on March 30th, the object of the raid being accom-



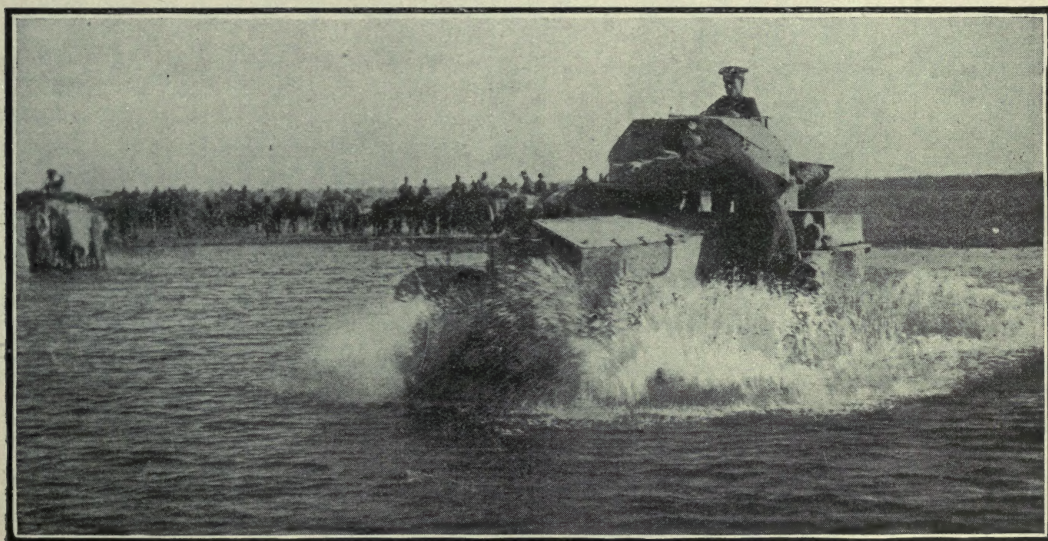


*With the British troops in Mesopotamia. Transports crossing the Diala.*

plished, the force began to fall back upon Es Salt. During these operations east of the Jordan 700 prisoners were taken, as well as 4 guns, several machine-guns, and a number of motor lorries. A small Turkish force which attacked our rearguard was easily beaten off.

On April 10th a Turco-German offensive was opened against the coastal sector of the British

front in Palestine, but was repulsed with heavy losses, after which the British line was advanced at several points by counter-attacks. On the following day a Turkish attack on the position at El Ghoraniyeh, on the east bank of the Jordan, broke down with heavy losses; and a simultaneous attack on the Jericho-Nablus road met with a similar fate.



*With the British troops in Mesopotamia. Armoured car crossing Diala river.*



At present it cannot be said, therefore, that the promised German effort for the recapture of Jerusalem has made any progress.

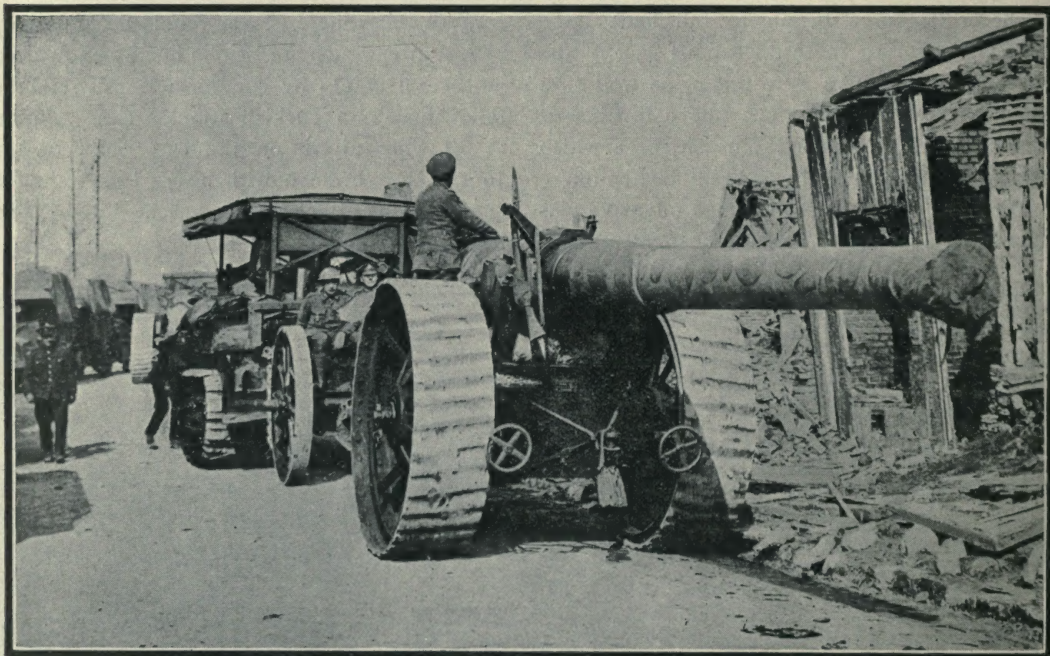
A.G.C.

### A Brilliant Victory on the Euphrates.

**O**N the Euphrates a highly successful operation was completed on March 26th in the neighbourhood of Khan Baghdavieh, 22 miles north-west of Hit. The British columns advanced early in the morning against the Turkish positions, while cavalry moved round the Turkish right to cut off the enemy's retreat along the road to Aleppo. The result of the day's fighting was that the main

Turkish positions were carried by assault, and that the Turks in their flight to the north-west were cut off by the cavalry and thrown back with heavy loss. The result was that practically the whole Turkish force in this district was destroyed, over 5,000 prisoners being taken, besides many guns, machine-guns and other material. The remnant of the Turkish force was pursued beyond Ana, 83 miles north-west of Hit, by March 28th, and large depôts of ammunition fell into British hands at Haditha and Ana. The British advance has since been carried far beyond Ana without any formed bodies of the enemy being encountered.

A.G.C.



*A British Big Gun moving up into support.*



# DIARY.

## March.

- Mar. 22.—Enemy break through west of St. Quentin; British falling back. British cross and bridge the Jordan.
- „ 23.—French intervene in Somme battle.
- „ 24.—South of Péronne enemy cross Somme at certain points; violent enemy attacks on line of R. Tortille.
- „ 25.—Enemy in Bapaume and Nesle; French evacuate Noyon. British occupy Es Salt (Palestine).
- „ 26.—Hostile attacks on line Noyon, Roye, Chaumes, and astride the Somme. British victory at Khan Baghdadie; 3,000 prisoners (Mesopotamia).
- Mar. 27.—Enemy attacks at Beaumont Hamel, Puisieux and Moyenneville repulsed; French abandon Montdidier.
- „ 28.—Heavy fighting from S. of Somme to N.E. of Arras; Dernancourt regained. British occupy Deir Siman, Kh. Umm el Ikba, and Kh. Umm el Bereid (Palestine).
- „ 29.—Heavy fighting near Mezières and Demuin; Mezières lost. Colonial troops destroying Hedjaz railway.
- „ 30.—Demuin captured and regained; Moreuil retaken.
- „ 31.—Fighting between Albert and the Avre.

## April.

- April 1.—British 73 miles beyond Ana (Euphrates).
- „ 2.—British take 192 prisoners near Alette. Prisoners in Mesopotamia amount to 5,232.
- „ 3.—Fighting near Feuchy and Hébuterne.
- „ 4.—Strong enemy attack between Somme and Avre; British pressed back near Hamel and east of Villers-Brettoneux.
- „ 5.—Strong enemy attack between the Somme and Bucquoy.
- „ 6.—British re-established in Aveluy Wood; 120 prisoners.
- „ 9.—Strong enemy attack from La Bassée Canal to Armentières; Richebourg—St. Vaast and Laventie lost; Givenchy lost and recaptured. British line advanced  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles on 5 miles front in Palestine.
- „ 10.—Heavy fighting between Armentières and Ypres-Comines Canal; British on line of Wytschaete-Messines Ridge and Ploegstreet; Armentières abandoned.
- „ 11.—Heavy fighting on R. Lawe and between Estaires and Steenwerck; Merville lost.
- „ 12.—Strong enemy attacks S. and S.W. of Bailleul and near Neuve Eglise and Wulverghem.
- April 13.—Enemy driven out of Neuve Eglise.
- „ 14.—British abandon Neuve Eglise; 7 attacks in Merville sector repulsed.
- „ 15.—Enemy take Mont de Lille and Ravelsberg; British abandon Bailleul and Wulverghem.
- „ 16.—Enemy gain Wytschatete, Spangrockmolen, and Meteren; British retake Wytschaete and Meteren; British line withdrawn east of Ypres.
- „ 17.—British retire from Wytschaete and Meteren; situation S.E. of Kemmel Hill restored; attacks on Merris and Bailleul sectors repulsed. Belgians repel strong attack and take 600 prisoners.
- „ 18.—Severe fighting on Lys front, particularly at Givenchy, where enemy was repulsed completely and with heavy loss; 200 prisoners.
- „ 19.—Enemy rejected from advanced defences round Givenchy and Festubert.
- „ 20.—Successful minor enterprises S. of Hébuterne, S. of Scarpe R., and near Robecq; 37 prisoners.
- „ 21.—Enemy ejected from advanced posts near Robecq.



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